

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 280505
ORIGIN ARA-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

66011

DRAFTED BY: ARA/CCA:WSSMITH:YT

APPROVED BY: ARA/CCA:WSSMITH

-----090282 231131Z /14

R 230809Z NOV 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 280505

FOLLOWING REPEAT PRETORIA 6254 SENT ACTION SECSTATE IFNO BONN
LISBON LONDON OTTAWA PARIS USUN NOV 18.
QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 6254

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, PDIP, AO, PO, UN

SUBJECT: APPROACH TO PORTUGAL ON CUBAN TROOPS IN ANGOLA

REF: A) STATE 268316, B) LISBON 8722

1. EMBASSY LISBON (REF B) REQUESTS PRETORIA AND USUN
COMMENTS ON LIKELIHOOD SOUTH AFRICA WOULD AGREE TO A UN-
MONITORED DMZ ENCOMPASSING BOTH SIDES OF ANGOLA-NAMIBIA FRONTIER.
AS LISBON POINTS OUT, THE CONCEPT OF SUCH A DMZ POSES
COMPLICATED PROBLEMS FOR THE ANGOLANS. FROM THE SOUTH
AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE THE MAIN CONCERN IS THE "THREAT" FROM THE
ANGOLAN SIDE TO THE POPULOUS REGION OF OVAMBO. AS PUT TO THE
WESTERN FIVE BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN S THROUGHOUT THE NAMIBIA
TALKS, THE PRINCIPLE ELEMENT OF THAT THREAT (ASIDE FROM THE
NEUTRALIZATION OF SWAPO FORCES FOR WHICH THE EVOLVING SETTLEMENT
PLAN ALREADY PROVIDES), IS THE CUBANS. THE WITHDRAWAL OF CUBANS
FROM THE BORDER AREA, MOST PARTICULARLY FROM THE TERRITORY
OPPOSITE OVAMBO, COULD BE SIGNIFICANT IN HELPING TO GAIN SOUTH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 280505

AFRICAN ACCEPTANCE OF A SETTLEMENT PACKAGE.

2. LIKE LISBON, OUR INFORMATION ON THE DISPOSITION OF
UNITA AND MPLA/CUBAN FORCES IN THE BORDER REGION IS
LIMITED.

(A) AT PRESENT, THE AREA FROM THE COAST ALONG THE KUNENE
RIVER TO RUACANA IS ONE OF MARGINAL SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY

CONCERN. THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THIS DESOLATE REGION (KAOKOLAND) AND ONLY TOKEN SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY PRESENCE. WE HAVE NO INDICATION OF LARGE CUBAN OR MPLA PRESENCE ON THE ANGOLAN SIDE IN THIS AREA.

(B) THE SITUATION ALONG THE EASTERN STRETCHES OF THE FRONTIER IS MURKY. IN THE AREA OPPOSITE THE NAMIBIAN REGION OF KAVANGO, UNITA IS CLEARLY ACTIVE AND APPARENTLY IN CHARGE IN SOME AREAS. IN PART FOR THIS REASON, SWAPO POSES NO CURRENT SECURITY PROBLEMS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICANS IN KAVANGO. THE SOUTH AFRICANS DO NOT APPEAR ESPECIALLY CONCERNED OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF A CUBAN INCURSION ACROSS THE OKAVANGO RIVER OR INTO THE CAPRIVI STRIP.

(C) SOUTH AFRICA'S CENTRAL CONCERN IS WITH OVAMBO, THE HEAVILY POPULATED REGION WHERE SWAPO HAS MOST OF ITS SUPPORT AND WHERE SWAPO GUERRILLA INCURSIONS FROM ANGOLA HAVE BEEN CONCENTRATED OVER THE YEARS. MPLA/ CUBAN FORCES APPEAR TO CONTROL THE ANGOLAN BORDER TOWNS IN THIS REGION. WE DO NOT KNOW THE EXTENT OF UNITA'S PRESENCE IN THE HINTERLANDS OF THIS AREA, BUT UNITA ACTIVITY APPEARS TO BE CONCENTRATED FURTHER EAST.

3. THE SAG HAS ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLE OF A REDUCTION, PULL-BACK AND CONCENTRATION OF ITS FORCES IN NAMIBIA AND THE PRESENCE OF UN OBSERVERS IN THE NORTHERN BORDER AREA. THE REMAINING BASIC PROBLEMS WITH RESPECT TO SOUTH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 280505

AFRICAN TROOPS ARE (A) TO SECURE A FURTHER REDUCTION IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RESIDUAL FORCES DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD, AND (B) TO PERSUADE SOUTH AFRICA TO WITHDRAW FROM ITS BASES IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE OPERATIONAL AREA. IN JUSTIFYING THEIR RETENTION OF SOME MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY PERSONNEL IN THE NORTHERN BASES, THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE EMPHASIZED THE POTENTIAL THREAT FROM THE CUBAN FORCES IN ANGOLA. THEY HAVE NOT RAISED THE MPLA "THREAT". THE SOUTH AFRICANS ARE PRESUMABLY CONCERNED ABOUT DEALING WITH A POSSIBLE BREAKDOWN IN THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS AND SUBSEQUENT REESTABLISHMENT OF THEIR CONTROL. PERHAPS JUST AS IMPORTANT TO THEM IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTINUED SOUTH AFRICAN PRESENCE AS A MORALE BOOST TO ITS LOCAL SUPPORTERS.

4. WHILE DECLARATION OF A DMZ ALONG THE WHOLE ANGOLAN/ NAMIBIAN BORDER WOULD SEEM IMPRACTICAL IN TERMS OF ACCEPTABILITY TO LUANDA, WE BELIEVE THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD BE INTERESTED PRIMARILY IN THE PULL-BACK OF CUBAN FORCES IN THE AREA OPPOSITE OVAMBO BETWEEN RUACANA AND OMUNDAUNGILA. IF THE CUBANS WOULD AGREE TO DRAW BACK SOME DISTANCE IN THIS AREA AND MAKE SOME SORT OF

DECLARATION OF NON-AGRESSIVE INTENT, WHILE AT THE SAME
TIME SOME SORT OF UN MONITORING TOOK PLACE ON THE
ANGOLAN SIDE, E.G., VISITS TO MPLA BASES TO CHECK ON CUBAN
PRESENCE IN THE AREA, THIS COULD ENCOURAGE SAG AGREEMENT TO
TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM ITS NORTHERN BASES AND TO A UN MONITORING FORCE
IN NAMIBIA.
BOWDLER UNQUOTE HABIB

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, BORDER INCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE280505
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ARA/CCA:WSSMITH:YT
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770434-0762
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771125/aaaaaupp.tel
Line Count: 123
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 18b11e13-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 268316, 77 LISBON 8722
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 471909
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: APPROACH TO PORTUGAL ON CUBAN TROOPS IN ANGOLA
TAGS: PORG, PDIP, AO, PO, SF, UN
To: HAVANA
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/18b11e13-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009